

protect the subject matter of canceled claims 16-20 as presenting them coverage as Beauregard claims.

Claims 1-20 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Yoshida.

Claims 1, 6, and 11 have been amended to specify that each of the pixel data is expressed by using multiple bits. Since each pixel is an expression of multiple bits, bits of information can be placed within specific bit positions of pixel data without having to completely alter a pixel. For example, applicants disclose calculating the least significant bit (LSB) positions of intensity data of each pixel and placing the image processing information within these bit positions. See page 12, lines 14-16. In this way, the quality of the image is kept substantially unchanged, because the other bit positions of the pixel, the heavier weighted bits of the pixel, are left unchanged.

Yoshida, does not disclose having each pixel data expressed using multiple bits, as claimed by applicants. Without using multiple bits of information to express each pixel data, placing image data within specific bit positions without completely changing one or more pixels can not be accomplished. This would substantially effect image quality.

Independent claims 1, 6, and 11 all specify that each of the pixel data is expressed using multiple bits and are thus patentable over Yoshida. Claims 2-5, 7-10, and 12-15, which depend upon claims 1, 6, and 11, are patentable for at least the same reasons.

For the foregoing reasons, early action allowing claims 1-15 in this application is solicited.

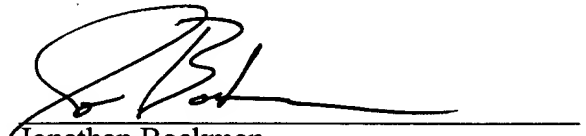
Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned **“Version with markings to show changes made”**.

In the event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and the Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 325772009100.

Respectfully submitted,

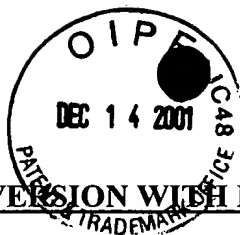
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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

In the Claims:

1. (Amended) An image processing apparatus, comprising [including]:
a processor, wherein the processor places [function to place] bits for describing information different from information of image data obtained by image processing on original image data[, respectively] in specific bit positions of pixel data, each of the pixel data being expressed by using multiple bits, at predetermined positions of said processed image.

6. (Amended) An image processing method comprising:
[a first step to obtain] obtaining first processed image data by performing image processing on original image data; and
[a second step to place] placing bits for describing information different from information of said first processed image data [respectively] in specific bit positions of pixel data, each of the pixel data being expressed by using multiple bits, at predetermined positions of said first processed image.

11. (Amended) A recording medium in which a program for a computer is stored, wherein said program is one that enables the computer to perform the following processing:
placing bits for describing information different from information of image data, said processed image data being obtained by image processing on original image data[, respectively] in specific bit positions of pixel data, each of the pixel data being expressed by using multiple bits, at predetermined positions of said processed image.